**CSPL (18) 78**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHTH MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 19 JULY 2018**

**IN** **70 WHITEHALL, LONDON**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Bew, Chair

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Simon Hart MP

Dr Jane Martin CBE

Professor Dame Shirley Pearce DBE

Jane Ramsey

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Ally Foat, Senior Policy Advisor

Dee Goddard, Senior Policy Advisor

Stuart Ramsay, Senior Policy Advisor

Amy Austin, Office Manager

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer

Apologies: Monisha Shah

**1. REGISTERS**

Lord Stunell declared his membership of the Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors.

**2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2018 were agreed subject to noting the agreement at the June meeting that it would be helpful to seek a meeting in the autumn with the House of Commons Standards Committee.

**Matters arising:**

**Westminster Harassment**

The Committee noted that the Chair, Dame Shirley Pearce and Jane Ramsey had met the Leader of the House of Commons for an update on the work of the Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy Working Group.

The Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme Delivery Report would be debated in the House of Commons on 19 July. The Committee had seen the report and agreed the following statement to be published on its website:

*The Committee welcomes the steps announced by the Leader of the House to put in place independent processes for dealing with allegations of bullying and harassment. We are particularly pleased that the lay members of the House of Commons Standards Committee will have a greater voice in individual cases involving an MP. The 6-month review will be a welcome opportunity to see how this works in practice, and to review the findings of the independent inquiries.*

Whilst welcoming the report, the Committee was still concerned to see how the processes would work in practice. The idea of a blog was discussed to explore some of the details of the report.

**3. MPs’ OUTSIDE INTERESTS: LESSONS LEARNT**

The Committee discussed the paper reviewing lessons learnt from *MPs’ Outside Interests*. In particular, the Committee noted that in the event of any review ‘pausing’ for any reason, as a point of good practice, the Committee should revisit and reconfirm the scope and timing of that review.

The Committee also agreed the importance of engaging with public opinion as relevant on any review.

**4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS REVIEW**

The Committee noted the update on the review of local government ethical standards, the focus of which it was noted, was on office-holders, rather than on councils as corporate bodies.

Some dates for visits to councils had now been confirmed. And, as agreed at the last meeting, those visits would also endeavour to capture the ‘community voice’.

**5. INTIMIDATION IN PUBLIC LIFE: FOLLOW UP**

The Committee noted and agreed the paper proposing a follow up plan to *Intimidation in Public Life.*

The Committee agreed to contact relevant stakeholders as appropriate (including government, social media companies and political parties) for an update on progress towards implementing the recommendations in the report.

**6. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the paper setting out future work proposals and possibilities. Final decisions would await the appointment of the new Chair.

**7. STANDARDS CHECK**

The Committee noted the standards check for June/July 2018.

**8. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD LOOK OF EVENTS**

The Committee noted the forward agenda and forward look of key events.

**9. AOB**

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for June 2018.

**Consultation on Code of Ethics for the Charity Sector**

The Committee noted that the National Council for Volunteering Organisations (NCVO) has launched a 12-week consultation on a new draft code of ethics for the charity sector.

The Secretariat will circulate a copy of the draft code with a draft submission for the Committee’s consideration during August.

**Independent Commission on Referendums summary report for information**

The Committee noted the launch on 9 July 2018 of the Independent Commission on Referendums’ report.

**United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)**

The Committee noted that the Secretariat appeared, with others, before the UN assessors undertaking the UK’s United Nations Convention against Corruption review on 9 July 2018.

**Dates of 2019 meetings**

The proposed dates of 2019 Committee meetings were noted.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

**Thursday 20 September 2018 to be held in Conference Room E, 70 Whitehall.**

**FAREWELL TO CHAIR**

The Committee thanked the Chair for all his outstanding work for the Committee over the past five years. The Committee were deeply appreciative of his leadership, the support he has given to all members of the Committee and the Secretariat during that time, and his insightfulness and kindness, and wished him well for the future.

**CSPL Secretariat**

**July 2018**